



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 1376.0 - Local Government and ABS (Newsletter), Sep 2008

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### ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

'Local Government and ABS' is a newsletter published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to help the Local Government Sector use statistics to assist with planning and other community servicing decisions.

For further details on how to subscribe see '[How to subscribe or unsubscribe to this Newsletter](#)'.

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### FIND A SNAPSHOT OF YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

If you are looking for information about the social and economic make-up of your Local Government Area, then the updated National Regional Profile may be just what you need. Released on 28 July 2008, the new National Regional Profile contains new and updated data, and many new features that make it easier to find the information you are looking for. This includes a series of on-line videos that explain step by step how to use the National Regional Profile to find regions and data of interest, and how to compare your region to others.

#### What is the National Regional Profile?

The National Regional Profile is a snapshot of data for small areas:

- Covering five years, from 2002 to 2006
- Available for Local Government Areas, Statistical Local Areas, and other larger geographies up to Australia
- With data grouped for easy reading under the topics of Economy; Population and People; Industry; and Environment and Energy
- New data in this release includes the number of businesses by industry, people whose main source of income was from their own unincorporated business(es), some 2006 Census of Population and Housing data (e.g. internet access, unpaid work), and the number and type of motor vehicles registered.

The profiles can be viewed on your screen, or easily downloaded to your computer. You can view/download one or many regions. The latest release contains other new features such as:

- New 'drill down' maps for selecting Local Government Areas
- Step by step guides on 'How to Select a Region' and 'How to Compare Regions'
- Help pages that explain what data are in the profiles and where to find it ('Data Availability' pages) and
- What the different types of regions are ('About the Regions in the NRP').

There are also Frequently Asked Questions, information about what you need to use the NRP, and a section for your Feedback. A series of videos shows how to find your region of interest. All of these features are on a new 'Welcome to the National Regional Profile' page.

### **How to find a profile of your Local Government Area**

On the ABS Home Page, look for 'Regional Statistics' on the left menu bar, and click on 'National Regional Profile'.

It's that easy to get to the 'Welcome to the National Regional Profile' page.

From the 'Welcome' page, selecting a region is just a few more clicks. Decide if you want to find your Local Government Area by name, or from a map, and click on that option in the centre of the screen or on the left menu bar.

### **Give us your feedback and suggestions**

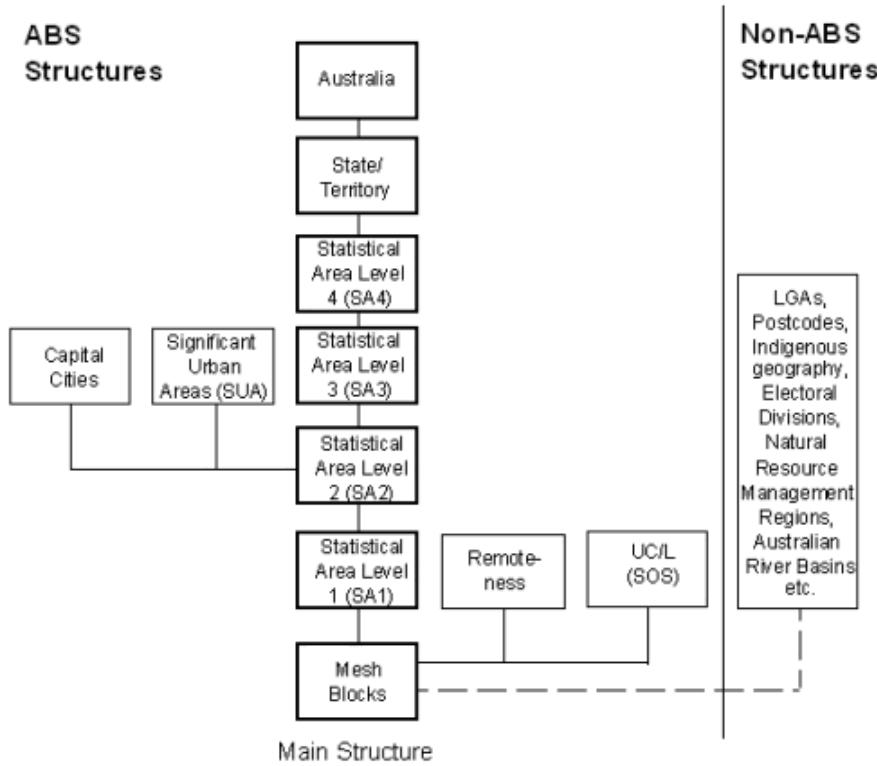
We have made a number of improvements to the National Regional Profile as a result of previous feedback, and are interested in your comments on this new release. If you would like to send us your comments, you can do so electronically, using the short feedback form that can be found under the 'Feedback' section on the left menu bar on any of the National Regional Profile pages. Alternatively, just email us at [regional.statistics@abs.gov.au](mailto:regional.statistics@abs.gov.au) with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

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## **ABS TO REPLACE STATISTICAL GEOGRAPHY IN 2011**

The ABS released the Information Paper: Outcome from The Review of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), 2008 (cat. no. 1216.0.55.002) on 25 July 2008. The paper explains that the current ASGC will be replaced in July 2011 with the new Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

The diagram below summarises the overall structure of the ASGS.



The ASGS brings all the spatial regions used by the ABS to output data under the one umbrella. They are separated into two broad categories: ABS structures, those which are defined and maintained by the ABS, and non-ABS structures, those defined and maintained by other organisations, but for which the ABS supplies data.

The regions of the ASGS, their codes and labels will be designed over the next two years. The first will be the SA2s, as these have emerged as the key level in the ABS Main Structure. The SA2s are the level for which the majority of ABS sub-state intercensal data will be available. They will have a minimum population of 3,000 and a maximum of 25,000, comparable in size to the current Statistical Local Area.

SA2 design has begun. A set of first cut boundaries are being developed with the State Planning Authorities in each state which will form the basis for wider consultation. The consultation period will be at least 3 months for each state and there is scope for significant revisions. SA2 design for each state should be finalised by early 2009.

SA1s are the smallest areas for which a wide range of Population Census data will be released. They will have a population of about 400 people, comparable in size to the current Census Collection District. The first cut SA1 boundaries will be developed within the ABS for most states. These will again be released for 3 months stakeholder comment before they are finalised in late 2009.

SA3s and SA4s will be the last regions of the Main Structure developed. This will occur in the first half of 2010. The consultation for these levels will be shorter and more targeted. SA4s will be used for the release of Labour Force Statistics and are expected to have a population of approximately the same size as the current Labour Force Regions. SA3s are a medium sized unit with a more variable population from 30,000 to 130,000.

Urban Centres and Localities (Section of State) and Remoteness structures require data from the 2011 Census to be defined. The ABS intends to generate UCL boundaries on a similar basis to past. The move to mesh blocks will create some differences as they allow a more precise definition of the urban rural boundary.

The non-ABS structures will be developed up to and beyond the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. Apart from the Indigenous geography, which will be more integrated into the ABS structures, other non-ABS

geographies will be approximated using mesh blocks close to the date of the Census.

Stakeholders interested in being consulted over the design, or anyone who has any questions about the new Geography should email [geography@abs.gov.au](mailto:geography@abs.gov.au).

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE?

### Collections

Currently, the Grants Commissions for each state are dispatching their electronic forms for the **Annual 2007-08 Local Government Finance Collection**. The financial and function data on these forms are edited with the output being used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to compile Government Finance Statistics. Data is published in *Government Finance Statistics, Australia* (cat. no. 5512.0) in early April next year.

The ABS return dates differ between jurisdictions, with some seeking information as early as mid-October and others due by the end of November. Returning forms earlier than the due date will greatly assist both the DLG/GC and the ABS to achieve their data processing schedules.

The ABS also conducts a quarterly survey of financial information which will be despatched to a selected sample of councils in the third week of September. There have been no changes to the actual questions, but some definitions have been updated to make the form clearer in where financial data items should and should not be included. An example of this is 'Works in progress'. Responses to the quarterly survey are required by 9 October 2007 (6 working days after the end of the quarter). Early attention to getting the forms to the ABS will ensure that the financial activity of local government is accurately represented in Australia's National Accounts.

The ABS thanks councils for their cooperation in providing high quality data for these collections. Information provided is used in making important policy decisions concerning the sector and it is important that accurate and timely information is returned by councils in building this data set.

### Visits with Local Government and Grants Commissions

The ABS has concluded its visits to each of the State/Territory Grants Commissions or Departments of Local Government. These meetings were very useful in helping both organisations to discuss issues that affect the annual collection.

At these meetings, the ABS also discussed the paper on improving the consistency of local government financial data collections across jurisdictions. Jurisdictions will provide written comments to the Local Government Division of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. These written comments will be discussed at the Grants Commissions Executive meeting to be held in Brisbane on 7 October 2008.

### Other Developments

Local Government Purpose Classification, 2008 (cat. no. 5514.0.55.002), was released by the ABS on 20 August 2008. The Local Government Purpose Classification (LGPC) provides a framework for classifying financial transactions made by local government authorities. The LGPC aligns with international standards such as the Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG) and is based on the Australian Government Finance Statistics (GFS) framework.

The ABS developed the Local Government Purpose Classification (LGPC) for use in the collection, analysis and dissemination of local government finance statistics in Australia. The ABS has produced this classification in line with its commitment to develop and promote the use of standard definitions, classifications and coding procedures to help ensure the comparability of data derived from a range of statistical, administrative and services delivery systems. There has been extensive consultation with external users during the development of the LGPC to ensure that the classification reflects the functions of local government in Australia and meets the data requirements of users of local government finance statistics. This will ensure continuity of local government financial statistics, as well as comparability

between levels of government.

## Contact

For further information or inquiries about Local Government Statistics, contact the Local Government Statistical Unit on (07) 3222 6022.

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## HELP FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON THE ABS WEBSITE

For help in finding data for your Local Government Area and information about how to keep up to date with the latest ABS releases and available training, click on the following link to view the 'Services We Provide to Local Government' information pages.

Alternatively, go to the ABS Home Page, click on 'Services' along the top navigation bar and follow the link to 'Local Government'.

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## MEAN, MEDIAN OR MODE? UNDERSTANDING STATISTICAL LANGUAGE

ABS has released Statistical Language!, 2008 (cat. no. 1332.055.002), a glossary of statistical terms aimed at helping people understand statistics. This release contains descriptions of terms, along with examples and diagrams. 'Statistical Language!, 2008' can be accessed via the link above and also from the 'Services We Provide to Local Government' pages under 'Helping you use data'.

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## RECENT ABS RELEASES

### **Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2007** (cat. no. 3235.0)

Released on 19 August 2008, this publication contains the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) for Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) and Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Australia at 30 June 2007, by age and sex.

### **Water and the Murray-Darling Basin - A Statistical Profile, 2000-01 to 2005-06** (cat. no. 4610.055.007)

Released on 15 August 2008, this publication presents information relating to the Murray-Darling Basin on a range of topics including climate, water availability, water consumption, agricultural production, Gross Value of Irrigated Agricultural Production, population, employment, social characteristics and natural resource management. Maps have been used extensively throughout the publication and where possible, data is presented for smaller areas within the Basin.

### **Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms, 2006-07** (cat. no. 4620.0)

Released on 25 June 2008, this publication presents estimates compiled from the second survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics dedicated to Natural Resource Management (NRM). Information is presented on natural resource management issues, activities and costs on Australian Farms along with data on weeds, pests, land and soil. Data is presented at the Australian, State and Regional (Natural Resource Management Region) levels.

### **Water Use on Australian Farms, 2006-07** (cat. no. 4618.0)

Released on 27 August 2008, this publication presents data on the type and area of crops irrigated, volume of water applied, and the sources of water used in agriculture. Data is available for each State, Statistical

Division, Natural Resource Management region and the Murray Darling Basin. Some previous estimates are included for 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05. Additional datacubes will be released at a later date as necessary.

### **Census of Population and Housing: Estimated Resident Population Profile Datapack, 2006 (cat. no. 2069.0.30.007)**

Released on 28 August 2008, this is the latest Census DataPack of community profiles. '2006 DataPacks' is a CD-ROM product containing 2006 Census of Population and Housing Community Profile data for all of Australia to the Collection District (CD) level and the matching digital boundary basemaps in generic Geographical Information System (GIS) format.

Other 2006 Census DataPacks include:

Basic Community Profile Datapack, 2006 (cat. no. 2069.0.30.001)  
Indigenous Profile Datapack, 2006 (cat. no. 2069.0.30.002)  
Time Series Profile Datapack, 2006 (cat. no. 2069.0.30.003)  
Place of Enumeration Profile Datapack, 2006 (cat. no. 2069.0.30.004)  
Expanded Community Profile Datapack, 2006 (cat. no. 2069.0.30.005)  
Working Population Profile Datapack, 2006 (cat. no. 2069.0.30.006)

For a detailed description of each DataPack, the release timetable and the geographic availability of each profile along with information on how to order a DataPack, see the 2006 Census DataPacks page on the ABS website.

### **Qld Stats, Aug 2008 (cat. no 1318.3)**

Qld Stats is a monthly electronic magazine containing an overview of Queensland's key economic and social indicators presented in graphs, tables and analytical summaries with links to more detailed products. Qld Stats also contains news of seminars, releases and other matters of statistical interest for Queensland.

### **Regional Statistics, Northern Territory, 2008 (cat. no. 1362.7)**

Released on 16 September 2008, this publication contains ABS and other Government agency data for Northern Territory regions and sub-regions. The publication presents information on a range of topics including population, employment, education and training, prices, income and expenditure, law and public safety, health, transport, housing and construction, agriculture and fisheries, mining and energy, tourism, imports and exports and government finance. Indigenous statistics are also included.

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## **FUTURE ABS RELEASES**

### **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), July 2008 (cat. no. 1216.0)**

Scheduled for release on 26 September 2008, this annual publication outlines the geographical classification system designed and maintained by the ABS which divides Australia into geographical areas for the purpose of collecting and disseminating statistics.

Note: The ASGC has recently been under review. For further information on this review refer to the article above ['ABS to Replace Statistical Geography in 2011'](#).

### **Perspectives on Regional Australia: Population Turnover, 2006 (cat. no. 1380.0.55.005)**

Scheduled for release on 30 September 2008.

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## **LINKS TO PREVIOUS ISSUES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ABS**

Local Government and ABS Issue 21 June 2008

Local Government and ABS Issue 20 December 2007

Local Government and ABS Issue 19 September 2007

Local Government and ABS Issue 18 June 2007

Local Government and ABS Issue 17 March 2007

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## **NEWSLETTER AND ABS CONTACT DETAILS**

This newsletter is designed to improve communication between the ABS and the Local Government Sector. New ABS initiatives to assist local government organisations will be announced in this newsletter as they evolve.

We appreciate receiving your views and suggestions about this newsletter so that it remains useful and assists you to understand and use ABS statistics. We also welcome suggestions for articles that you feel should be included. Please email your comments and suggestions to [regional.statistics@abs.gov.au](mailto:regional.statistics@abs.gov.au) or telephone (08) 8237 7350.

For other enquiries contact the **National Information and Referral Service** on 1300 135 070 or e-mail: [client.services@abs.gov.au](mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au).

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